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ABSTRACT

This book addresses problems facing U.S. schools, discussing the role of parental involvement and how social class pervades the school system. It suggests there are actually three school systems, with serious inequities among them (one serves the well-to-do and privileged, plus a few exceptional students from lower social classes; another provides basic skills and knowledge and helps students learn, but does not encourage independent, creative thinking; and the third serves the urban and rural poor and is inadequate). The book explains that rather than an educational crisis, there is an ongoing problem of inferior schooling for large numbers of students. Fourteen chapters examine: (1) "The Educational System We've Got"; (2) "What International Comparisons Really Show"; (3) "How Much is High-Quality Universal Education Valued?"; (4) "Social Class Differences in the Purposes of Education"; (5) "Differences among the Three School Systems"; (6) "Parental Differences in the Three School Systems"; (7) "The Power of Parental Mediation"; (8) "Types of School Reform: Standards-Based and Market-Based"; (9) "Types of School Reform: Equity-Based and Community-Based"; (10) "The Shape of the Future: Five Reform Programs"; (11) "Social Stigma and Disidentification with Schools"; (12) "Half Measures Don't Work"; (13) "Moving toward a Single School System: What Must be Done"; and (14) "Initiating Change." (Contains approximately 250 references and an index.) (SM)

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